

Veterans Benefits Administration



**Update on VA Education Issues
From Washington, DC
Education Service
March 28, 2006**



Topics of Interest

- Operational Performance
- Training & Development
- Outreach
- Automated Processes
- Web Self-Service
- Legislation
- Other Items of Interest



Operational Performance

FY Comparisons

	2003	2004	2005
■ Claims Received	1.41m	1.48m	1.57m
■ Claims Completed	1.23m	1.26m	1.33m
■ Average Processing Times			
– Original Claims (days)	23.1	25.7	32.6
– Supplemental Claims (days)	11.9	12.8	18.9
■ Blocked Call Rate	13.0%	20.1%	37.6%
■ Abandoned Call Rate	7.2%	9.9%	17.4%
■ High Satisfaction Rating	88.7%	85%	N/A
■ RPO Staffing (cum FTE)	666	626	641.3



Training and Development

- Introductory course for school officials
- How to prepare for compliance visits (for school officials)



Outreach: Targeted Mailings

- MGIB Eligibles on Active Duty
 - 12-month brochure and letter
 - Quarterly mailings continue
 - 2-year brochure and letter
 - Quarterly mailings began in September 2002
 - “6 months Before Discharge” mailing
 - Quarterly mailings began in May 2003
- Demobilizing Guard/Reserve Units



Automated Processes

- VONAPP (Veterans On-line Application)
- TIMS (The Image Management System)
 - (electronic folder with document & workflow control)
- VA-ONCE -- Electronic submission of enrollment information from schools to VA
- ECAP -- Processes 15+% of non-original MGIB enrollments without human intervention and establishes a control and/or partially processes 92% of non-original claims for all benefits
- WAVE -- Monthly student verification of enrollment using the Internet



Web Self-Service

- Our Web Site continues to be a popular “hit”
- RightNow Web eService Center
 - About 2.4 million user sessions in FY 2005
 - 95% self-service effectiveness
- WAVE (Web Automated Verification of Enrollment)
 - 1 million monthly verifications processed in 2005
 - Up almost 10% over FY 2004 total



Legislation



Passed, Pending and Possible



A New Education Benefit

- Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) – Codified in chapter 1607 of title 10
 - For Guard/Reserve personnel activated for emergency/contingency operations
 - Benefits commensurate with service length
 - 90 days plus = \$413.60 monthly
 - One Year plus = \$620.40
 - Two Years plus = \$827.20
 - Entitlement = 36 months (combined 48)
 - No Delimiting Date *
 - DOD funds payments and determines eligibility



Pending Legislation

H.R. 170	H.R. 1206	H.R. 2411	S. 43
H.R. 269	H.R. 1207	H.R. 2416	S. 121
H.R. 421	H.R. 1340	H.R. 3195	S. 151
H.R. 463*	H.R. 1543	H.R. 3347	S. 615
H.R. 717	H.R. 1565	H.R. 3625	S. 1019
H.R. 745	H.R. 1759	H.R. 4264	S. 1042*
H.R. 772	H.R. 1815*	H.R. 4361	S. 1162
H.R. 786	H.R. 1982	H.R. 4468	S. 1342
H.R. 924	H.R. 2131	S. 13	S. 1990
H.R. 948	H.R. 2248	S. 32	S. 2091
H.R. 1169	H.R. 2365	S. 38	S. 2163

For detailed information, go to <http://thomas.loc.gov>

109th Congress



Major Provisions

- Exclude the MGIB \$1200 contribution from certain student financial aid computations
- Exclude MGIB payments from a person's income for Federal education loan eligibility determinations
- Eliminate the \$1,200 "pay in"
- Provide another VEAP open window
- Provide an opportunity for some service members to revoke their election not to participate in MGIB
- Pay \$1,200 per month stipend (in addition to regular MGIB payment) to candidates pursuing full-time a doctoral degree in the sciences of engineering, mathematics, or other technology disciplines

109th Congress



More Provisions

- Allow accelerated payment for Commercial Driver's License Training Programs
- Increase MGIB-SR monthly rates
- Allow MGIB-SR claimants to continue to receive benefits for 5 years after leaving the Selected Reserves
- Define the monthly rate payable to MGIB-SR claimants as a percentage of the rate payable to MGIB claimants
- Allow MGIB-SR claimants to qualify for MGIB

109th Congress



Still More Provisions!!!!

- Allow DEA children to receive benefits until their 30th birthday (rather than their 26th birthday)
- Eliminate the 45 month entitlement for DEA claimants and replaces it with an \$80,000 cap on benefits
- Eliminate DEA eligibility to Correspondence, OJT, and Apprenticeship training.
- Allow a DEA participant an income tax deduction for the cost of educational expenses which exceed the total amount of DEA benefits received from VA during the year. The participant doesn't have to itemize other expenses to get this special deduction.

109th Congress



What? Another GI Bill?

Proposal for a "Total Force GI Bill"

- VACOE recommended replacing three VA programs with one that would apply to everyone in the Armed Forces
- New single program would be codified under title 38, USC
- Benefit levels would be commensurate with amount of military commitment



Total Force GI Bill: Framework

- Tier 1 (similar to current MGIB-AD)
 - For all who enlist for active duty
 - Entitled to 36 months at the highest basic rate
- Tier 2 (similar to current MGIB-SR)
 - For those who commit to SR for 6 years
 - Entitled to 36 months at a percentage of the highest basic rate (suggested at 35%)
- Tier 3 (similar to REAP)
 - For those activated 90 days or more
 - Entitled to one month at highest basic rate for each month of activation (maximum 36 months)



Total Force GI Bill: Status

- VA promised to present concept to joint VA/DOD council and establish a work group
- Work group has held eight meetings thus far
 - Defined objectives
 - Discussed purposes of each current program and effect of one program
 - Validated most assumptions made by VACOE
 - Identified “must haves” in one program
 - Completed a “side-by-side” comparison



Total Force GI Bill: To Do

- Agree on appropriate features a single program should have
- Examine benefit levels for each tier
- Prepare an estimate of what a new program might cost
- Report findings to VA/DOD council and the VACOE



Unless there are questions, I'll



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